Arms Sales to Mideast Called Counter to Others

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A top State Department official said yesterday the United States has been forced to sell defensive weapons to some Middle East nations to counter the arms flow into the area from other countries.

Douglas MacArthur II, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, said the sales have been made on a selective basis after it was determined they would not be an unbalancing factor in the delicate political situation there.

MacArthur's statements came in a letter to Sen. Hugh Scott, (R-Pa.) who had written President Johnson asking that the United States provide defensive armaments for Israel.

MacArthur told Scott, "Over the past years, the United States has met what it assessed as legitimate defense requirements by sales of limited amounts of military equipment to some Arab countries as well as to Israel."

MacArthur told Scott the U.S. has provided Patton tanks to Jordan and sold them to Israel. The Hawk missile was sold to Israel to provide the basis for an air defense system. The U.S. and Great Britain also have agreed to provide an air defense system for Saudi Arabia, he said.